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Middle East

DEPARTMENT OF STATE UNCLASSIFIED INFORMATION

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MEMORANDUM FOR FILES

SUBJECT: MEDO

On August 26 representatives of the Department of State, the Department of Defense and the Joint Staff met at 3:45 to discuss certain points raised in the JCS memorandum on the UK proposals for the establishment of MEDO (SECTO 24, London June 27, 1952) as a preliminary to the preparation of U.S. comments on the UK proposals for circulation to the several sponsoring powers. Present at the meeting were:

Maj. Gen. A. P. Fox, USA, JSSC
Maj. Gen. E. J. Rogers, Jr., USAF, JSSC
R. Adm. W. F. Boone, USN, JSSC
R. Adm. H. P. Smith, USN, OSD-OFMA
Capt. E. Grant, USN, OSD-OFMA
Cdr. R. K. Kaufman, USN, JSSC
Mr. J. D. Jernegan, State Department
Mr. J. H. Ferguson, State Department
Mr. A. B. Daspit, State Department
Mr. P. T. Hart, State Department
Mr. [illegible] Stabler, State Department

Mr. Daspit opened the conversation by stating that the Department of State had studied the memorandum of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, which suggested that four elements should be included in any US position on the MEDO. The proposals made in paragraphs 3a and 3c of the memorandum were obviously desirable but the Department of State was not altogether clear as to the other two points:

1. They were not certain as to what was meant by a "Middle East Defense council" and the exact character of the Allied Planning Group as suggested in paragraph 3d of the Joint Chiefs' memorandum.

2. They were not entirely clear as to whether the Joint Chiefs actually desired the setting up of a Steering Group of the UK, Turkey and one Arab State which they suggested as a negotiating position in paragraph 3b(3) of their memorandum.

In addition,

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In addition, the State Department desired to know Defense's views on the French Aide-Memoire which proposed that MEDO should receive its direction and guidance through the NATO Standing Group in Washington and the method which should be used in dealing with this proposal.

In reply to the first point raised by the State Department, General Fox stated that he was not sure as to whether the proposal for an Allied Planning Group and a Middle East defense council was intended as an alternative to the MEDO proposal, to be adopted in the event the Arab states were unwilling to participate in MEDO, or as an outright substitute approach to the general problem of Middle East defense. There appeared to be agreement as between the representatives of State and Defense that the approach to the Arab States should be sufficiently flexible and informal to permit the adoption of various alternative courses in the further development of MEDO and that, depending on the nature of their reaction to the initial approach, an invitation to the Arab States to attend a "council" or "conference" to discuss problems of Middle East defense might be considered. There was no disagreement as to the desirability of the Western Powers making plans for the defense of the Middle East even though there should be no Arab participation in a MEDO. It was pointed out however that such planning might be accomplished in a number of different ways and the State Department representatives emphasized that it would be a mistake to advertise the creation of an exclusively Western Planning Group to study Middle East defense problems.

In reply to the second point raised by the State Department, General Fox stated that the JCS was fundamentally opposed to having the NATO Steering Group function for MEDO and to having any Steering Group in MEDO with more than three states represented. The particular suggestion for a Steering Group to be composed of the UK, Turkey and one Arab State was put forward as a suggested negotiating position, since the Joint Chiefs were convinced that the question of a Steering Group would undoubtedly arise in the course of the negotiations looking toward the establishment of the organization. He thought however that the Joint Chiefs agreed that it would be desirable, if possible, to avoid the establishment of a Steering Group of any sort during the initial planning stage of MEDO.

There was entire agreement as to the unacceptability of the proposal in the French Aide-Memoire that the NATO Standing Group should also provide direction for MEDO, and the discussion centered on the problem of how best to persuade the French to drop their proposal. The State Department could of course inform the French through a diplomatic note that

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the US rejected the proposal but there was some doubt as to whether the French would accept this as the final word on the subject. Another way would be to hold a three power meeting (US, UK and France) at which the French could be told by a ranking US military officer that the proposal was completely unacceptable; in the view of the State Department this procedure was likely to have greater effect. However, there was danger that news of such a meeting would leak to the other sponsoring powers and to the Arab States, with adverse effects. On balance it seemed best to reject the proposal in a diplomatic note and to arrange, if possible, to clinch the matter by General Bradley stating the position to his colleagues on the Standing Group. The State Department might suggest to General Bradley the desirability of such action.

Mr. Daspit handed around an outline of points which he proposed should be made in drawing up the U.S. comments on the British memorandum. It was agreed that these points, modified to take account of the discussion of the Planning Group and the Middle East Defense Council, were appropriate for inclusion in the proposed comments.

See Deptel #1645 to London for comments on UK MEDO paper.
9/6/52
in Middle East file